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Trends: Health Sciences and Biomedical Sciences Content

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Against the Grain

"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"

Trends: Health Sciences and Biomedical Sciences Content

by **Ramune K. Kubilius** (Collection Development/Special Projects Librarian, Northwestern University, Galter Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>

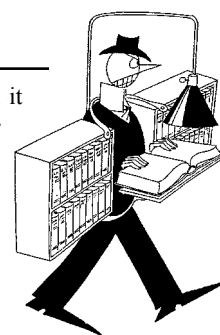
Traditionally, many health sciences and biomedical libraries' mission statements have emphasized that the libraries serve the research, education and clinical (patient care) information needs of their users. Addressing these needs is still at the core of service and collection management, but each of these areas has developed, expanded, and brought new challenges over the past few years in ways that a crystal-ball-gazer could not have anticipated. Biomedical research advances have continued at a fast pace, while health profession education and patient care have not stood in place, either. A new alphabet soup of terms and phrases is in current vogue: global health, patient safety, evidence-based health care, the Human Genome Project, embedded health sciences librarians, informationists, bioinformatics, medical informatics. This special issue of *Against the Grain* (ATG) contains

a collection of papers that addresses recent trends in biomedical and health information production, collection, and provision. The papers may reveal threads common to developments affecting various types of libraries, or the publishing and scholarly communication sectors, but perhaps with a slightly unique or different "spin" that is specific to biomedical and health fields.

Libraries serve the information needs of health sciences and biomedical sciences populations in various settings — hospitals and academic medical centers, educational institutions, health associations, government health agencies, pharmaceutical and other health-related industries, etc. Public libraries and general academic libraries, too, are often called upon to provide information resources for health and medical information quests. The **Medical Library Association** (www.mlanet.org) took

up the gauntlet when it developed a **Consumer Health Information Specialization Program**. While Category A of the program addresses administrative and service planning issues, one of the aims of Category B is to help with resource identification training. In her paper, **Patricia Pinkowski** reviews some recent trends and challenges in meeting the information needs of the increasingly demanding user group seeking health information — the general population, patients, collectively called "consumers."

continued on page 20



If Rumors Were Horses

Springer Science+Business Media has reached an agreement to acquire **BioMed Central Group**, the global open access publisher. **BioMed Central** was launched in May 2000 as an independent publishing house committed to providing free access to peer-reviewed research in the biological and medical sciences. **BMC** is the largest open access provider in the world with over 180 peer-reviewed journals.

Derk Haank, CEO of Springer Science+Business Media said: "This acquisition reinforces the fact that we see open access publishing as a sustainable part of STM publishing, and not an ideological crusade. We have gained considerable positive experience since starting **Springer Open Choice** in 2004, and **BioMed Central's** activities are complementary to what we are doing."

Matthew Cockerill, is Publisher of **BioMed Central**.

www.springer-sbm.com/index.php?id=291&b_ackPID=132&L=0&tx_tnc_news=4970&cHa_sh=b5a2aa41d8



Blackwell has just appointed the deserving **Andrew Hutchings Blackwell Group Chief Executive Officer!** In his new role **Andrew** will have full responsibility for both **Blackwell Book Services** and **Blackwell UK Ltd.** **Andrew** takes up his new role with immediate effect and the **BUK Board** now report directly to him. We all remember when **Andrew** joined **Blackwell's Oxford office** in 1987. He led both the Information Technology and Marketing departments in Oxford while also completing the **Blackwell's Management Training program**.

After a three-year assignment in **Blackwell USA Oregon offices** leading the integration of the global businesses, **Andrew** took on global responsibility for the Acquisitions and Distribution functions. He took on the role of **BBS UK Managing**

Director in March 2005 and led the recovery in performance within that business unit. **Andrew** was appointed **Blackwell Book Services CEO** in March 2007. During **Andrew's** time,

continued on page 6

What To Look For In This Issue:

A Showcase of Specialty Reference Books 44

WorldCat Selection: A Shorter, Smoother Path from Selection to User Access..... 54

Quick Tips for Media Selection and Acquisitions, Part II..... 72

Interviews

Kingsley Greene 58

Bill Cohen..... 60

Profiles Encouraged

Nicole Mitchell..... 8

Patricia Pinkowski 24

Meg White..... 28

Elizabeth Lorbeer..... 32

Jaron-Alena Porciello..... 36

Medha Devare 38

Melissa Nasea..... 42

Kingsley Greene 62



1043-2094(200811)20:5:1-W

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Trends ... from page 1

While it may not be true for many consumer-oriented book and audiovisual-based collections, for many years the rule of thumb in many health sciences collections' budgeting was that approximately 80% of a collection budget's allotment was set aside for serials.¹ [p. 106] Journals have been and continue to be a traditionally dominant communication vehicle in the constantly changing biomedical and health sciences fields. It is important to note that other traditional publication types are still becoming "journal-like" in 2008, four years after the **24th Charleston Conference**, with its chosen theme, "All the World's a Serial." The evolving nature of scholarly publishing and dissemination in all fields and across all publication types warrants vigilance and current awareness. For this *ATG* issue, two papers, one by **Meg White**, one by **Elizabeth Lorbeer** and **Nicole Mitchell**, examine a publication format earlier covered in 2001 and 2005 issues of *ATG*, but still very much in flux. **White** surveys the current "topography" of eBooks for the health sciences, **Lorbeer** and **Mitchell** present insights into their use by academic health sciences users and the resulting collection management issues for libraries.


Recently, "translational medicine" has become an increasingly prevalent phrase. Since it involves research that goes "from bench to bedside," many institutions are building their biomedical basic research enterprises to span


the bridge to clinical research and patient care endeavors that are already in place. The introduction to an April 2008 *Journal of Medical Internet Research* article, "Supporting emerging disciplines with eCommunities,"² addresses the changing nature of science as evolving, "from a solitary pursuit into a team-based collaborative activity and, more recently, into a multidisciplinary research enterprise." Increasingly, commercial information products, portals, and "toolkits" are announced that aim to funnel or pull together information resources produced by or needed by clinicians or researchers. **Jaron Porciello**, **Medha Devare**, and **Jon Corson-Rikert** write about the challenges of meeting collaborating researchers' information needs and share the experience of their academic institution's library as it addressed these needs, utilizing a "build it and they will come" approach. The research discovery tool about which they write was initially designed for life sciences researchers, and the authors report on its evolution and new developments that expand the project's utility to biomedical and other researchers.

Last but not least, interest continues in the history of biomedical and health institutions, scientific advances and medical accomplishments (especially those of affiliated alumni and faculty). There is still value seen in locally produced, or locally available, or unique, or rare resources. The **U.S. National Library of Medicine** houses one of the world's largest history of medicine collections and its **History of Medicine Website**, www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/index.html, includes links to several regularly

Wandering the Web from page 18

The Knit Witch — <http://knitwitch.com/> and <http://knitwitch.com/videos.htm>

The Knit Witch — A Site for the Knitting and Crochet Enthusiast at <http://knitwitch.com/> is an excellent Website for all skill levels. Check out **The Knit Witch** mini-workshops at <http://knitwitch.com/videos.htm>! Using large-gauge yarn and needles, she carefully describes and demonstrates how to make a yarn over correctly (in purl and knit), how to slip-slip-knit, knit one front and back, etc. The videos run about two minutes, each covering only one procedure. Many of her videos appear on **YouTube**, so they are more accessible than some other knitting sites that require special downloads to play the instructional videos. **The Knit Witch** also features videos for crocheting techniques, many products such as attractive pottery yarn bowls and spindle bowls, hand-dyed yarns in several weights, available in beautiful colors, and even all natural lotions and creams for "yarn addicts ... to keep those hands and fingers ready for the needles and hooks!" **The Knit Witch's** Website features a cute logo of a knitting witch riding a wooden knitting needle in front of a full moon made out of glowing yellow yarn! This site is very useful for knitters wanting to find out quickly how to do a specific procedure when they are in the middle of a project or for those interested in enhancing their skills by learning new techniques. 

updated directories of history of medicine collections. **Melissa Nasea** and **Ruth Moskop** share their experience, insights and advice on some recent trends and challenges for biomedical and health libraries and librarians "on the frontlines," in serving one of the most revered traditional roles of the library profession — preservation of the past. 

Column Editor's Note: Thank you to all of the special issue authors who agreed to share their thoughts, insights, and experience. Thank you to **Katina Strauch** for her guidance. This special issue is a snapshot in time. Themes of **Charleston Conferences of the past**, "Plus Ça Change" (1987) or "And the Beat Goes On" (1999) resonate ... *Someone will quite likely need to revisit trends in health and biomedical sciences content again soon!* — **RK**

Endnotes

1. Morse, David H., ed. *Acquisitions in Health Sciences Libraries. (Current Practice in Health Sciences Librarianship; v.5).* Chicago, IL: Medical Library Association, 1996.
2. Spallek, Heiko, Brian S Butler, Titus K Schleyer, Patricia M Weiss, Xiaoping Wang, Thankam P Thyvalikakath, Courtney L Hatala, and Reza A Naderi. "Supporting Emerging Disciplines with e-Communities: Needs and Benefits." *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 10, no.2 (2008): e19.